

2710
S E R M O N

PREACHED IN

LAMBETH CHAPEL,

AT THE

CONSECRATION

OF THE

Right Reverend FATHER in GOD,

T H O M A S

Lord Bishop of BANGOR.

On Sunday *February* 4th. 1727-8.

By T H O M A S W A I T E, A. M.

Lecturer at the T E M P L E. *K*

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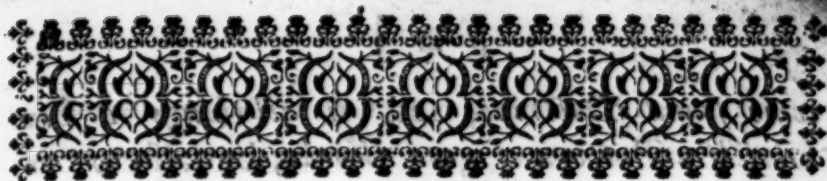
STERN

IN THE
LATTER CHAIR
AT THE
CONVENTION
OF THE
RIGHT HONORABLE LORDS OF GOD



THOMAS

NOTES



TITUS I. 7.

*A Bishop must be blameless, as the
Steward of God.*



T. *Paul* having converted *Titus* to the Faith, was pleas'd, after a competent Experience had of his Piety and good Conduct, to promote him at length to the Office and Dignity of a Prime Ruler of the Church. Which Office, that he might adorn, and every way fully discharge, here is, throughout this whole Epistle, a very particular and seasonable Advice address'd to him, respecting at least the most considerable and momentous Points of his Duty.

FOR he is instructed not only how to behave in the great Affair of constituting Church Officers^a, but also what Directions to give concerning the regular Deportment of all Ranks and Relations of Men^b. He is reminded not only to speak the Words that^c be-

^a Chap. 1. ver. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. ^b Chap. 2. ver. 2, 6, 9.
^c Ch. 2. v. 1.

come sound Doctrine, and ^d in all things to shew himself a Pattern of good Works, but also to ^e rebuke sharply all unruly Walkers, and ^f to let no Man despise his Authority. He is commanded not only to censure false Teachers, and to admonish and reject Hereticks ^g, but to inculcate and preach up a strict Obedience unto the Civil Magistrate ^h, and moreover, to see that the Lives of all the Members of the Church be not inconsistent with, but conformable to the Faith; and that they who profess themselves Believers in God, *should be careful always to maintain good Works* ⁱ.

THE Reason upon which the Apostle grounds these his Advices to *Titus*, was, because he had left him at *Crete*, as we read in the fifth Verse, with this very Aim and Design, that he might *set in order the things that were wanting*, that he might nourish the Infant Churches in that Island, might superintend the Growth and Prosperity, and might *ordain Elders in every City*. Which last Words imply for certain, that *St. Paul* had consecrated *Titus* a Bishop, because otherwise he could have had no Power of ordaining at all, and much less of ordaining *Elders*; which must necessarily be understood of Bishops in this Place, or else *St. Paul* will not be consistent

^d Ch. 2. v. 7. ^e Ch. 1. 13. ^f Ch. 2. 15. ^g Ch. 3. 10. ^h Ch. 3. 1. ⁱ Ch. 3. 8.

with himself, whilst he puts an Elder in this verse, and a Bishop in the next but one; that is, in my Text, to signify the same thing.

As to the Qualities and Endowments of such as should be thought worthy of being admitted to so high and honourable a Station in the Church, it is observable, that in the Compass of two Verses, the Apostle mentions twice, seeming thereby to insist upon it in a more especial Manner, That a Bishop should *be blameless*, without a Fault of any Kind, if it were possible for frail Man to be so. However, at least, that he should be far removed from the just Suspicion of any thing infamous, or of evil Report, either in his Life or Doctrine. Nothing short of such a Character can satisfy, or come up to the Argument used in the Text, why a Bishop should be blameless, namely as (or because he is) *the Steward of God*, he hath the Government of God's Family entrusted to him: And as he presides over the inferior Servants of the Household, so will Confusion and every evil Work naturally abound among the latter, if the former be not a Pattern and Precedent to them of every thing that is good. The Faith and Behaviour of the Prelate are, as it were, the Form and Mould in which the Faith and Manners of others are shap'd and modell'd^k. There is

It was a wise Remark of St. Ambrose, *In episcopo. vita formatur omnium.*

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Necessity therefore, that *such a Person* should be blameable upon no account, nor in any just Degree: For if he were, how then can it be expected, that the Church under his Care should ever come out, as it is design'd, by its chief Lord and Saviour to do, *a glorious Church, without Spot or Wrinkle, or any such thing*¹. The Force and Influence of Example was too well understood by St. *Paul*, for him to think it probable, that a vicious Pastor should be able to return a virtuous Flock. Hereupon does he strictly require it of *Titus*, that such as he should ordain Bishops, should be holy and harmless, innocent and inoffensive, that they should be easy of Access, meek and unpassionate, free from Excess of any kind, free from an inordinate Love of Riches, by fordid and covetous Designs; that they should be kind and hospitable, Lovers of Goodness, and of good Men, modest and prudent, just and honest, strict and temperate; and moreover, that they should be firm and constant, in owning and asserting the Doctrines of Christianity, and that they should also be able, not only to persuade, but to confute those that resist and oppose the Truth^m.

THESE being the Qualifications necessary according to St. *Paul's* Judgment, in all Ages, for so important an Office; it is a Reflection

¹ *Ephes. v. 27.* ^m *Ephes. i. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.*

of no little Joy and Consolation; which is hereby suggested unto *the holy Fathers* now present; and that as well on the account of their Gifts and Graces in all things answerable hereunto, as that they are, upon the present Occasion, to confer the Episcopal Charge, and lay Hands upon one who is able to stand the Test, and pass with Honour the Trial, of being for Life *blameless*, and for Doctrine, *holding fast the faithful Word, as he hath been taught*, so as to know both how to exhort, and how to convince the Gain-sayers.ⁿ

IT is hereupon become unnecessary for me at this Time, and *more especially in this Place*, to enlarge upon the Duties belonging to the Episcopal Office. Those Duties are better known and practis'd by them that are immediately concern'd therein, than to want either the Illustration or Enforcement of any private Hand.

THAT I may not therefore incur the Suspicion of attempting to dictate or prescribe to those from whom I *ought* to learn, suffer me to make the following Use of the Words of my Text. Namely, *First*, to observe from them, That the Office

ⁿ *Cb. i. v. 9.*

of a Bishop is no new thing in Christianity, but as old as the Apostles Days. 2^{dly}, That tho' in the Epistle before us, and in other Parts of the new Testament Writings, *Elders*, that is, Presbyters and Bishops, are coincident Terms; yet that this does not argue against a Disparity of Order, and Distinction of Offices. But then, 3^{dly}, That it may argue for, and ought to infer an Obligation incumbent upon common Presbyters to be blameless in their Lives and Doctrines, as who are, in a secondary Sense, and under their respective Bishops, Stewards of God.

THAT the Office of a Bishop is no upstart Notion in Christianity, nor any Innovation in the Church, is clearly enough to be concluded from the very Mention of the *Name* within the Text. For tho' the Word render'd ° *Elder* will not, in all Places where it occurs, denote strictly the Episcopal Office, yet that the word render'd P *Bishop*, does not so, can't reasonably be affirm'd by any Man, till he can find out a Text for his Voucher, ascribing it to some Person who can be prov'd to have been no more than a Presbyter of the common Rank. Such a Voucher will be harder to be produc'd than is perhaps by some Men imagin'd, and harder still will it be to do Justice to all the Passages in Scripture,

• Πρεσβύτερος. P Ἐπίσκοπος.

where

where the Name of Bishop is apply'd, without supposing the Persons to whom it is apply'd, to be vested with a Power of Ordination, of Ecclesiastical Censures, and the like concomitant Privileges which to this Day are claim'd for Episcopal. However, were we not at present to insist, that the Office is necessarily imply'd in the Name, there would, notwithstanding, be many other irresistible Proofs, for the evincing this Office to have been no late Invention, but an original Settlement of the Apostles themselves, which they made by Divine Appointment. I would only beg your Patience at present, whilst I enquire into these two Particulars.

1st, WHETHER the Apostles had a proper Authority deriv'd to them from Christ, for the constituting such Officers as we call Bishops in the Church? And 2^{dly}, Whether they did not actually and in Fact exercise that Authority so deriv'd, in appointing by their own Hands Bishops in many Churches, and in great Variety of Instances?

IF these two Points can be made out in the Affirmative, there will be no Room to question, but that *Episcopacy* is an Institution apostolical, and in Consequence hereof, that it is an Institution originally proceeding from Christ himself, the co-

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eternal and consubstantial Son, who is ^a *the express Image* of the Father.

Now the Extent of Power belonging to the Apostles will be best known by consulting the Nature of that Commission, which they received from Christ; and we find in the Gospel written by St. *John*, that the Commission ran in no lower Terms than these, *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you* ^r. The Father had sent the Son to constitute and erect a Church, to collect out of Mankind *a peculiar People*, having Faith in the Gospel, and *being zealous of good Works*. This Business of his Father's Christ did always industriously pursue, and was ever constantly employed about. Nor did he, whilst he had his Residence in the World, deposite the Care and Government of the Church in the Hands of others, but kept it in his own. He all along acted visibly as Head and chief Pastor of the Flock, till having finish'd the Work that was given him to do, and being about to return to that *Glory which he had with his Father before the World began*; he then was pleas'd to depute his Apostles to succeed him as his visible Representatives in this spiritual Administration: And to enable them to act in his

^a *Heb. i. 3.* ^r *John xx. v. 21.*

[II]

stead, and supply his Place, he conferr'd the same Ecclesiastical Authority upon them which the Father had done upon him ; He appointed them to propagate their Mission unto others, as the Father had appointed him to propagate his Mission unto them ; and as God had given him suitable Powers whereby to lay the Foundation of the Church, so did he give unto them the like suitable Powers for its Continuation and Perpetuity.

THIS being the Import of the Commission granted to the Apostles, it will follow from hence, that whoever shall deny them to have a Power of appointing Bishops to preside over the Affairs of the Church, will be oblig'd to maintain, either, that Christ himself had no such Power, which would be bold and presumptuous even to think ; or else, that there were Reserves of this Power in the Commission of Christ, which were not imparted in his Commission to the Apostles. But this would be, directly to contradict, and perfectly to overthrow the unlimited Manner *in which Christ is* pleased to express himself, in the Words, *As my Father sent me, so send I you.*

IF it should be said, that the Apostles never understood their Commission to extend thus far ; that were an *Affertion*, which would want

greatly to be prov'd, or rather 'twere what is impossible ever should be prov'd; because the Practice of the Apostles consequent upon their Commission, plainly speaks, that they did apprehend themselves to be so impower'd, otherwise why did they in Fact exercise such a Power? Why did they appoint by their own Hands, Bishops in many Churches, and in great Variety of Instances? Or, if they did not appoint any such, then it might be proper to ask, By what Authority was St. *James* Bishop of *Jerusalem*, *Timothy* of *Ephesus*, *Titus* of *Crete*, *Epaphroditus* of *Philippi*? Then we might go on to question by what Right was St. *Clement* plac'd in the See at *Rome*, *Ignatius* at *Antioch*, *Polycarp* at *Smyrna*? These were all *Men of Renown* for their Piety and Prudence, living each of them in the Days of some or other of the Apostles. And as it is unlikely, but that they would have had Marks of Disgrace fasten'd upon 'em, in some Part or other of the New Testament Writings, if they had assum'd the *Episcopate* of their own Heads, without Order or Appointment of the Apostles: So is it unreasonable to think that any Thing less than such express Order and Appointment would have induced them to assume it, at a Time especially, when the Difficulty of the Post was equal to the Danger of it; and the last so great, that it was almost

almost a sure and certain Step to *Martyrdom* to be a Bishop.

It cannot therefore but be own'd, agreeably to the universal Testimony of Primitive Writers in the Case, That these Men had most certainly the Gift of the High Priesthood from the Apostles themselves^r. And they may justly be admir'd, all and each of them, upon the same Account, that *St. Chrysostom* admires *St. Ignatius*, *Not only that they were thought worthy of so high a Degree, but that they were ordain'd to it by those holy Men, and had the Hands of the blessed Apostles*

^r That *St. James* was constituted by the Apostles Bishop of *Jerusalem*, whoever pleases may consult *Hieronymus Catal. Script. Ch. 2.* or the Author of the *Const. Apost. Lib. 8. c. 35.* or *Euseb. Hist. Eccl. Lib. 2. c. 23.* That *Timothy* was ordain'd Bishop of *Ephesus* by *St. Paul*, and *Titus* of *Crete* by the same Apostle, may be seen in *Eusebius, Lib. 3. Cap. 4.* and *St. Chrys. Hom. 1. in Philip.* *Theodoret* says further, That as *Timothy* and *Titus* were Bishops of *Ephesus* and *Crete*, under the Name of Apostles; so *Epaphroditus* was Bishop of *Philippi* under the same Title, *Theod. Com. 1 Tim. 3. 1.* As to *St. Clement* and *Poly-carp*, we are assur'd by *Tertullian*, That the one was plac'd by *St. Peter* at *Rome*, the other by *St. John* at *Smyrna.* *Vid. Tertul. de Præscript. ch. 32.* And then, for *St. Ignatius* at *Antioch*, *Theodoret* is express, that he receiv'd ἀρχιεπισκοπὴν χάριν, the Gift of the high Priesthood from the Hand of the great *Peter.* *Theod. Dial. 1. Tom 4. p. 33.*

laid

laid upon their sacred Heads ^r. This in the mean time will be a necessary Deduction from what has thus been offer'd, That the Apostles neither wanted the *Power* nor the *Will* of constituting Episcopal Government ; it being their constant Usage and Custom to settle such Government in all Churches, as they planted them, and brought them to a due Ripeness and Maturity for it ^u. So that the Superiority of Bishops over their Clergy and People, is no unprecedented Thing in Christianity, but what has been all along known in the Church ever since the Apostles Days. And therefore, our own *National* Church ought not hereupon to be blam'd or contemn'd, but rather valued and applauded for asserting and maintaining such Superiority, and especially as she hath done it since the *Reformation* ; by observing always a just Medium between the arbitrary and Popish Practices of *Lording it over God's Heritage on the one Hand*, and the levelling Methods of confounding and destroying all Ecclesiastical Authority on the other.

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^r Chrysost. Hom. 42. in Ignat.

^u Thus Clemens Romanus expressly testifies *ad Cor. 1. Ep 42.*
Οι Ἀπόστολοι — κατὰ χάριν ἐν ᾧ πόλεις χειροτονίης, καθίστανον ἡς ἀπαρχὰς ἀνθρώπων δοκιμαζόντες ᾧ πνεύματι ἐν ἐπισκόποις. That the Apostles,

It is commonly urg'd indeed, by such as are against all Rule and Authority among Church Officers, that Bishops were originally no more than Presbyters; and that in the Style of the Sacred Scriptures, there is no Difference made between the one and the other. Here then it will be proper to pass on to our second Observation, which was to shew, that tho' in the Epistle before us, and in other Parts of the New Testament Writings, *Elders*, that is, Presbyters and Bishops, are coincident Terms; yet that this makes nothing against a Disparity of Order, or Distinction of Offices. The Word *Elders* is taken originally from the *Greek* Translation of the Old Testament, where it commonly signifies Rulers and Governors; in which extended and dignified Sense there can be no Question, but that it may be applicable to Bishops. *St. Paul* does undoubtedly apply it so in the Context, (as has above been hinted) and there are besides, many other Places (which need not now be recited) where it is in like Manner apply'd. Yea, 'tis certain, that the Apostles themselves sometimes refuse not to set themselves forth under this Character.

stles, wherever they came, preaching in Countries and Cities, appointed Bishops out of those that were first converted, after they had prov'd them by the Spirit.

BUT

BUT then it must be consider'd, that there is another Acceptation of this Word *Elders*, frequently to be met with in the New Testament ; as when it is taken in a more limited and confin'd Sense, to denote those of the second Order and Degree in the Church, Those, unto whom the Title of Presbyters did more strictly and peculiarly belong.

THUS St. *Paul* uses the Word, when writing to *Timothy* who was Bishop of *Ephesus*, he charges him after this Manner, *Receive not an Accusation against an Elder, but before two or three Witnesses* *. From which Apostolical Charge it is plain, that if the Accusation was rightly fortified by a sufficient Number of Witnesses, it was then incumbent upon the Bishop to receive it.

BUT how came it to be the Bishop's Duty to receive a proper Accusation against a Presbyter, if the Presbyter were upon a Level with himself, and the one had no Power or Superiority over the other ? That Man must be very perverse, who will not allow it to be evident from hence, that there were Presbyters in the Apostles Days, distinct from Bishops, and subject to their Censures and Jurisdiction.

* 1 *Tim.* v. 19.

So that we see there is a twofold Sense in which the Word *Elders* is used in the New Testament; and if Men would be careful always to distinguish between these two Senses, it would be easy for them to observe, that tho' Bishops are the same with Presbyters, in its first and largest and most comprehensive Notion, yet there is no Colour of Reason to make them the same in its second more peculiar and restrained Sense; nor can it justly be concluded, from the Names being used promiscuously, that there was no such Office as that of Bishops, but all were Presbyters, any more than it ought to be concluded, that there were no such Persons as Presbyters, but all were Bishops.

THE Truth is, there were three Orders and Degrees of Men settled in the Church by Apostolical Constitution.

AND as the Distinction or Difference of each of these Orders is clearly founded in Scripture, and as easily to be deduced from thence; so is it greatly to be confirmed by the Testimony of those Writers, who lived in the Apostolick Age, and who frequently speak of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, as distinct Degrees in the Church, but of the two latter as always subordinate to the former.

mer^y. The Coincidence of the Names, *Bishops* and *Elders*, was not in that Age thought an Argument sufficient for to justify a Confusion of Offices. Never indeed was it in any Age thought so, till the *Romanists* first began to insist upon it, to serve some exorbitant Purposes of their own Church; and *some others* afterwards thought fit to make use of it, as a Reason to introduce a confused Parity and Equality in Church Government. But as to the Argument it self, it is certain, that there is no solid Force or Validity in it, to such an End; because it is not possible, where things are in their own Natures different, to make them the same, by any Community of Names or Words.

THE Nature of things is, we know, what has no Dependence at all upon the Names which they go by; neither can it but be always allow'd in Reason and Truth, that they are Offices entirely different and distinct in themselves, that of being a *Ruling Elder*, and that of being an *Elder* only in

^y It is a remarkable Passage in *Clemens Romanus*, where he speaks of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, under the old *Jewish* Titles of High-Priest, Priest, and Levite, 1 Ep. *ad Cor.*

And it is yet more remarkable, that of St. *Ignatius*, in his Ep. *ad Magnesios*, where he exhorts them to study to do all Things in divine Concord, under their Bishop presiding in the Place of God, and the Presbyters in the Place of the Apostolical Senate, and the Deacons to whom is committed the Ministry of Jesus Christ.

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common, subject to his Rule, and liable to be call'd to account by him. A Relation, 'tis true, there may be, and is between the one and the other of these, and a Resemblance of Duty there also is belonging unto both Offices. From whence we shall take Occasion, at present, to proceed to what was in the last Place propos'd, namely, to speak to the Obligation incumbent upon common Presbyters to be blameless in their Lives and Doctrines, as who are in a secondary Sense, and under their respective Bishops, *Stewards of God*.

It is not to be doubted, but that, in a primary Sense, this Title of *Stewards of God*, will belong to those that are chief Officers of the Church; those, who are in a more eminent manner set over the House of God.

BUT then, it is not so far appropriate to them, as to be no way applicable to others; for, more generally taken, it is of equal Latitude and Extent with that of *Ministers of Christ*, and so reaches to all those that have a proper Authority to dispense the Gospel, and administer in holy Things. Thus St. *Paul* seems not to confine himself to those of his own Rank and Degree, but means it of all in general, whose Business it was to wait at the Christian Altar, when he says, *Let a Man so ac-*

count of us as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God^z. Presbyters and Deacons, therefore, are Stewards of God, and have the same honourable Relation, with respect to their particular Flocks, as Bishops have with respect to their Clergy and People, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made them Overseers^a. Now if Presbyters and Deacons were always to look upon themselves as acting under this Capacity of Stewards of God, it would be morally impossible for them to be guilty of any Offences whereby the Ministry should be blamed. They could not fail of taking heed unto those Offices which they have received of the Lord, so as to fulfil them. For when they considered that they are God's Agents with the People, deputed by him, and deriving their Commission from him; when they considered, that he made them Rulers over his Household, to give their Fellow Servants their Meat in due season, and to distribute his Allowance according to his Command: Moreover, when they considered, that it is required of Stewards, that a Man be found^b faithful, and that God will certainly exact a very severe Account of their Management in this Case; how could they choose with all these Thoughts about them, but be scrupulously nice and conscientious in the Discharge

^a 1 Cor. iv. 1. ^a Acts xx. 28. ^b 1 Cor. iv. 2.

of so important a Trust? A Trust! which is without all Dispute of the noblest Kind that can possibly be reposed in Man; because the Care of Souls which are invaluable and immortal is committed on the one Hand, and *the glorious Gospel of the blessed God*, the Mysteries of Faith, and Doctrines of Salvation are committed on the other.

WITH what exceeding Prudence and Caution, with what unwearied Pains and Diligence, with what Strictness of Fidelity, ought they, who are so *greatly* entrusted, to conduct themselves? How *holily* and *justly*, and *unblameably* should they form their own Manners and Behaviour in the World? And How earnest and *instant* should they be, *both in Season and out of Season*, to press it upon others, *to live as becomes the Gospel of Christ*, and to *adorn the Doctrine of God their Saviour in all Things?*

WITH what Zeal and Assiduity should they preach and expound the Word of Life? Keeping back nothing which is necessary for the Edification of their People, but setting before them in full Light, the *Truth as it is in Jesus*, and declaring to them *the whole Counsel of God?* With what Care and Circumspection should they guard against erroneous and heretical Opinions, neither suffering their People to be corrupted by such, *as teach*

teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men, nor to be infected by others, that are for rooting up the very Foundations of Christianity, and for planting nothing but Atheism and Irreligion in its Room? What Labour and Application will it require in the *Ministers of Christ* to be able, not only to confute the Disputers and Gainfayers of the Age, but to furnish their People also with proper Arguments, whereby they may be *ready always to give an Answer to every Man that asketh them a Reason of the Hope that is in them*^c? There is but one Thing more which the Time due to the ensuing great Solemnity, will permit me to mention, and that is, That the Stewards of the Gospel should be more than commonly careful to avoid preaching their own Passions and Prejudices, or advancing any Doctrines that may kindle Sedition or cherish Faction, or beget Turbulency and Disquiet, either in Church or State. It is, we know, the Glory of the Christian Institution to be an Institution of Peace; very ill therefore must it become *Christian Ministers*, not to make it a Maxim with themselves, as well as to inculcate it upon others, *That if it be possible, and as much as lieth in them, they should live peaceably with all men*^d: Yea, and since 'tis obvious to take notice, that the Duty of a good Subject hath as

^c *Pet. iii. 15.* ^d *Rom. xii. 18.*

great a Stress laid upon it, as most others in the System of Christian Duties ; very absurd also must it be for the Ministers of Christ, either to be deficient in this Duty themselves, or to omit *putting* the People *in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates* ^e. It would betray a total Disregard, not only to our Duty, but also to our Interest, were we, the Clergy of the Church of *England*, to be negligent in this Point, and that because 'tis our Case, to live under a Government, as happy as any reasonable Man can desire, more easie, than what they that value it not do deserve ; a Government, wherein no Care is wanting to preserve the State in Wealth, Peace, and Prosperity, and wherein the Church is at once doubly blessed, with A KING FOR ITS NURSING FATHER, AND A QUEEN ITS NURSING MOTHER.

MAY God in the goodness of his Providence be pleased long to continue these Blessings to us ; and that we may not render our selves incapable of them, may we be always mindful as well to live *in all Holiness and Righteousness before him*, as to serve, honour, and humbly obey our Governours *out of a Principle of Conscience*, and according to God's holy Word and Commandment.

^e *Tit.* iii. 1.

F I N I S.

p. 4. l. 19. for the r. their. p. 6. for *Ephes.* i. *Titus.*

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